

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method in a computing environment for teaching critical thinking skills, said method comprising:
 - providing informational content relating to a subject matter and a question concerning said informational content to a learner;
 - receiving from said learner an answer to said question and a justification for said answer;
 - conducting an analysis involving said answer, said analysis providing at least one result;
 - providing said at least one result to said learner; and
 - providing the answer and justification of an expert in the field of said subject matter to said learner.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing reference material to said learner, said reference material designed to assist said learner in forming said answer and said justification.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein providing reference material includes providing an explanation of criteria applicable to forming said answer to said question.
4. The method of claim 2 wherein said reference material includes an electronic link to a Web site containing background information concerning said subject matter.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising storing said answer and said justification on a computer storage media.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said storing is accomplished by saving said answer and said justification in a database.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said informational content and said question are presented as part of a first electronic page and said at least one result is presented as part of a second electronic page.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein said analysis is a statistical analysis.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said at least one result includes the distribution of all learner answers to said question.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein said at least one result includes the average of all learner answers to said question.

11. The method of claim 1 further comprising allowing said learner to interact with the answers and justification of other learners for said question.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said interaction includes displaying the answers and justification of other learners for said question.

13. The method of claim 11 wherein said interaction includes receiving a comment from said learner relating to another learner's justification and sending said comment to said other learner.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said comment is sent by e-mail.

15. The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving and storing said informational content, said question, and said expert answer and justification.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said informational content, said question and said expert answer and justification are stored in a database.

17. A computer readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method recited in claim 1.

18. A system in a computer environment for teaching critical thinking skills to a learner, said system comprising:

a content module operable to receive and store informational content and to provide said content to said learner;

a query module operable to receive and store questions and to provide said questions to said learner, and further operable to receive and store said learner's answers to said questions and said learner's justification for said answers;

an analysis module operable to analyze learner answers and justifications in order to form at least one result and to provide said at least one result to said learner;

an expert module operable to receive and store an expert's answers and justifications and to provide said expert answers and justifications to said learner; and

a learner interface module operable to provide a connection between said learner and said system.

19. The system of claim 18 further comprising a reference module operable to receive and store reference material and to provide said reference material to said learner.

20. The system of claim 18 further comprising an interaction module operable to allow said learner to interact with other learners' answers and justifications.

21. The system of claim 20 wherein said interaction module is operable to display all learners' answers to said question and the justifications for these answers.

22. The system of claim 20 wherein said interaction module is operable to e-mail a comment from said learner to another learner.

23. The system of claim 18 further comprising a progress report module operable to provide said learner with information indicative of said learner's progress through said informational content and said questions.

24. The system of claim 18 further including an author interface operable to provide a connection between an author and said system.

25. The system of claim 24 further comprising a features module operable to receive feature selections from said author and to store said selections.

26. The system of claim 24 further comprising a learner feedback module operable to allow the author to select the information that the system will provide to said learner concerning said learner's answers and justifications.

27. The system of claim 24 further comprising a data reporting module that is operable to allow the author to determine the information he or she will receive concerning the learners' answers and justifications.

28. The system of claim 18 wherein said content, query and expert module store information in a database.

29. The system of claim 18 wherein said analysis module is a spreadsheet application.

30. The system of claim 18 wherein said analysis module is operable to perform statistical analysis.

31. The system of claim 18 wherein said content module provides said informational content and said query module provides said question as part of a first electronic page and said analysis module provides said at least one result as part of a second electronic page.

32. The system of claim 18 wherein at least one of said modules contains HTML instructions.

33. A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium containing computer readable code thereon for teaching critical thinking skills to a learner, said computer readable code comprising :

computer readable code devices configured to cause a computer to transmit informational content and a question associated with said informational content over a communications network to a client computer;

computer readable code devices configured to cause a computer to receive and store an answer and a justification over a communications network from said client computer;

computer readable code devices configured to cause a computer to perform an analysis of said stored answers and justifications and provide a result;

computer readable code devices configured to cause a computer to transmit said result over a communications network to said client computer; and

computer readable code devices configured to cause a computer to transmit an expert answer and justification over a communications network to said client computer.

34. The computer program product of claim 33 wherein said computer readable code further includes computer readable code devices for receiving a resource selection over said communication network from said client computer and for transmitting resource information over said communications network to said client computer.

35. The computer program product of claim 33 wherein said computer readable code further includes computer readable code devices for receiving an interaction selection over said communications network from said client computer and for transmitting the answers and justifications of all learners over said communications network to said client computer.

36. The computer program product of claim 35 wherein said computer readable code further includes computer readable code devices for receiving a comment about another learner's answer and justification over said communications network from said client computer and for transmitting said comment to an e-mail account associated with said other learner.

37. The computer program product of claim 33 wherein said computer readable code further includes computer readable code devices for receiving and storing information content, questions and expert answers and justifications.

38. The computer program product of claim 33 wherein said informational content and said question are transmitted as part of a first electronic page and said result is transmitted as part of a second electronic page.

39. The computer program product of claim 38 wherein said expert answer and justification is transmitted as part of said second electronic page.

40. The computer program product of claim 33 wherein said computer readable code further includes computer readable code devices for obtaining data relating to site usage, learner characteristics, site performance, or learner motivation and transmitting said data to a second client computer.